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Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: round table 2

Disability-inclusive development in national, regional and international processes

Background paper prepared by the Secretariat**

Introduction

1. Since its inception, the United Nations has been promoting an inclusive and equitable society built on diversity and equal opportunities for all. The international community has continuously been making efforts towards this goal through the adoption and implementation of a series of international instruments specifically on disability, including the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (1982), the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and, most recently, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex).

2. The Convention guides the international normative framework for the advancement of persons with disabilities in society and development. In the preamble to the Convention, the States parties emphasize the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development. Article 32, paragraph 1, specifically speaks to the need for international development programmes to be inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities, further setting out the responsibilities of States parties.

3. However, gaps between policy and practice, as well as challenges in mainstreaming efforts, remain. Disability has been largely invisible in the major internationally agreed development frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals and in follow-up efforts for their implementation and

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evaluation. Tangible progress on the inclusion of persons with disabilities remains limited. Persons with disabilities still face multiple barriers and numerous obstacles to their full and equal participation in development.

4. As the deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals draws near, the international community is increasingly recognizing the urgency and importance of including disability in development. In recent years, the General Assembly has adopted a series of resolutions on realizing the Goals for persons with disabilities (see resolutions 62/127, 63/150, 64/131, 65/186, 66/124 and 67/140). In its resolution 63/150, the Assembly reaffirmed the need to include and integrate the rights, well-being and perspective of persons with disabilities in development efforts, without which the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals, would not be genuinely achieved. More recently, in its resolution 66/124, the Assembly decided to convene a High-level Meeting, on 23 September 2013, with the overarching theme "The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond", in order to strengthen efforts to ensure accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts.

5. In his report entitled "Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond" (A/67/211), the Secretary-General referred to the following four priority areas for mainstreaming disability in development: (a) strengthening and applying the international normative framework on disability; (b) promoting accessibility for inclusive and sustainable development; (c) addressing gaps in capacity-building; and (d) assessing the situation of persons with disabilities: inclusive monitoring and evaluation frameworks. These priority areas are essential for sustainable, equitable and inclusive development for all.

6. Ongoing preparatory processes towards the post-2015 development agenda could provide crucial entry points for ensuring that disability perspectives become an integral part of the development agenda, subsequently narrowing the gap between policy and practice and helping to realize the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development.

Progress achieved and challenges encountered in furthering disability-inclusive development

7. Mainstreaming disability in development at all levels is a strategy to promote inclusive, sustainable and equitable development for all. The United Nations has long taken a leading role in highlighting the urgent need to mainstream disability in policy implementation and programme development. In recent years, there has been some progress in this regard. However, there continues to be a major backlog in terms of including disability in international development frameworks, as well as in their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The need to coordinate efforts to include disability in development action has been voiced and grown stronger. Multi-stakeholder partnerships have become more important for resource sharing and knowledge dissemination, as well as for building capacity for practical action on the inclusion of disability on the ground.

8. At the global level, in 2010, during its second five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly called for action to promote

the inclusion of people with disabilities in productive employment and decent work and their equitable access to economic opportunities and social services. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development it was highlighted that sustainable development requires the involvement of persons with disability (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex). In 2013, during its fifty-first session, the Commission for Social Development further underscored the need for persons with disabilities to be included in processes that affect their lives and to benefit from equal opportunities to live independent and productive lives.

9. More recently, the General Assembly, in its resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (resolution 67/226, para. 23), provides a clear mandate for United Nations country teams to support activities that promote the inclusion of disability in programmatic work, including in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, to achieve national development priorities.

10. At the national level, Member States are increasingly adopting a wide array of approaches to including disability in development efforts, such as through the development of disability-inclusive and responsive national plans and strategies. International development cooperation initiatives too are increasingly becoming sensitive to disability issues, taking into account accessibility for all and the need to provide social services that are responsive to the situation of persons with disabilities.

11. In this context, a twin-track approach may be considered for strategies that aim to promote the inclusion of disability with a view to empowering persons with disabilities through enhanced personal agency and making opportunities more equitable in various domains.[1] First, there should be equal access for persons with disabilities to mainstream systems and services. Interventions in this regard focus on improving accessibility, removing barriers and making reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities in public transportation, built environments and communications, as well as in education and health care, to facilitate individual autonomy and participation in the community. Second, targeted interventions should be implemented to address the specific needs of persons with disabilities so that they are able to participate in society and development by providing training and rehabilitation services. For both aspects, accessibility and coordination among all stakeholders is crucial, as is the need to take into account the local and cultural contexts in which persons with disabilities live.

12. Through multi-stakeholder partnerships involving Governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, and other stakeholders, progress is becoming possible. Challenges remain, however, when it comes to including disability in major development policy frameworks and development efforts at all levels and, therefore, when it comes to making a real change in the lives of persons with disabilities. Some major contributing factors are: the lack of inclusion of disability in development policies and programmes or in related processes and mechanisms; the lack of resources to implement and sustain disability-inclusive initiatives; negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities; inadequate and

[1] United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Department for International Development, *Disability, Poverty and Development* (London, 2000).

inaccessible social service provision and the compounding issue of service delivery limitations; and the dearth of reliable data and evidence on the situation of persons with disabilities.

13. Specific enablers are required for disability-inclusive development to occur.[2] Change need not be only about laws and policies, but could also involve institutions and the monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes to understand, by using a "disability lens", how disability affects the whole of society. In order to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development and to see improvements in terms of accessibility of physical environments and information and communication technologies, a change in cultural attitudes is also needed.

Ways forward: opportunities to further promote the inclusion of disability in development processes at all levels before 2015 and beyond

14. In its resolution 65/1, the General Assembly addressed progress made in the implementation of the eight development goals emanating from the United Nations Millennium Declaration and associated commitments and requested that recommendations be made for further steps to advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

15. Efforts to date on the post-2015 development agenda suggest that the advancement of persons with disabilities remains a peripheral concern. But the increasing recognition of disability as a cross-cutting development issue also represents opportunities for the fuller inclusion of disability.

16. The year 2013 presents a historic opportunity for the inclusion of disability in development beyond 2015. The High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development, organized at the level of Heads of State and Government, will be held on 23 September 2013 with the overarching theme "The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond" (see resolution 66/124). The outcome of the High-level Meeting could advance the implementation of all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, for persons with disabilities and ensure the inclusion of disability in the emerging post-2015 development agenda, framework and processes by identifying strategic entry points and collaborative partnerships for implementation.

17. At the international level, there are ongoing intergovernmental processes and mechanisms, such as the open working group mandated by the General Assembly to prepare a proposal on sustainable development goals for consideration by the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session (see resolution 66/288, annex, para. 248). Other related processes for identifying priorities and helping to reach consensus on a post-2015 development agenda are presented in the annex. These processes should be open to and inclusive of persons with disabilities, address pressing challenges and recognize opportunities to take action for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for all.

[2] World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, 2011).

18. In addition, national consultations in over 100 countries are being conducted to exchange ideas and create a shared vision of the international development agenda beyond 2015.[3]

19. It is expected that current multi-stakeholder consultations could further promote the explicit inclusion of disability in emerging post-2015 development frameworks with specific results for action to create a genuinely inclusive society and development for all.

Questions for consideration

20. The following questions are presented for consideration:

- Which options have proved effective in overcoming obstacles and barriers to mainstreaming disability in development?
- The current development processes provide opportunities to further include disability in development. Which specific entry points exist for incorporating disability in the post-2015 international development frameworks?
- How should the inclusion of disability in development be monitored and evaluated?
- The High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development will be held in September 2013. What concrete measures and actions should be taken by Member States, the United Nations, development agencies and civil society to implement the outcome of the High-level Meeting and follow up in furthering the inclusion of disability in development in all processes, at all levels?

[3] Information on countries where national consultations are ongoing is available from www.worldwewant2015.org/sitemap.

Annex

Select international processes relevant to discussions on a post-2015 development framework

Process	*Focus/priority themes/purpose*	*Date*
International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building	Share peacebuilding and State-building experiences	Ongoing
	Gather and discuss good practices and constraints to delivering effective international assistance in support of peacebuilding and State-building	
	Identify a realistic set of objectives for peacebuilding and State-building that could guide national and international partners	
	Build trust between participating countries and organizations	
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	The eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in 2012, served as the meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol	Ongoing
	Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action works towards a new climate change agreement, to be finalized in 2015	
Commission for Social Development	Promoting the empowerment of people to achieve poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all	February 2013
Commission on the Status of Women	Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls	March 2013
2012 annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council	Under the theme "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals"	July 2013
Second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development	Take stock of the main achievements of the Global Forum on Migration and Development process and address the relationship between the Global Forum and the United Nations	Second half of 2013

Process	*Focus/priority themes/purpose*	*Date*
Second International Conference on Nutrition	Review progress made since 1992, reflect on new and existing challenges and opportunities presented by changes in the global economy and the food system and by advances in science and technology and analyse policy options for improving nutrition	2013
2013 high-level segment and annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council	Under the theme "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals"	1-4 July 2013
Special event organized by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session to follow up on efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (to be confirmed)	As requested by Member States in "Keeping the promise, united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals" (General Assembly resolution 65/1, para. 79)	2013/2014 (to be confirmed)
Commission on the Status of Women	Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls	March 2014
Fourth Development Cooperation Forum	The 2014 Development Cooperation Forum will focus on the role of development cooperation in a post-2015 United Nations development agenda. Participants in the Forum could make contributions to the discussion on the post-2015 agenda	July 2014
2014 annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council	Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future	July 2014
2014 special session of the General Assembly to review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development adopted in 1994	Review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, assess current population and development issues and identify areas for the implementation of the Programme of Action beyond 2014 on the basis of the ongoing comprehensive operational review of such implementation	September 2014

Process	*Focus/priority themes/purpose*	*Date*
World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Under the theme "Learning today for a sustainable future", the event will mark the end of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. A review of the implementation of the decade will draw out the relevance of education for sustainable development for the post-2014 education and sustainable development agendas	November 2014
Comprehensive 10-year review conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries	General review conference focusing on issues relevant to landlocked developing countries	2014
World Conference on Indigenous Peoples	To share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and to pursue the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	2014
World Conference on Education for All	Assessment of progress made in the achievement of the six education for all goals and discussion on a way forward for education	April 2015
2015 special session of the General Assembly to review the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society in 2005	Review based on the results from two high-level meetings, one organized by UNESCO in 2013 and one by the International Telecommunication Union in 2014	September 2015
Third World Conference on Disaster Reduction	To review implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster and to facilitate the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/199	2015

Process	*Focus/priority themes/purpose*	*Date*
Commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women	(To be confirmed)	2015 (To be confirmed)
Ten-year review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States	International meeting to review implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States	2015
High-level midterm review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020	Review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, with a special focus on official development assistance commitments and on enhancing the resources of least developed countries. The review will cover the priority areas for action set out in the Programme of Action: (a) productive capacity; (b) agriculture, food security and rural development; (c) trade; (d) commodities; (e) human and social development; (f) multiple crises and other emerging challenges; (g) mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building; and (h) good governance at all levels	2015/2016

Source: United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, "Realizing the future we want for all: report to the Secretary-General" (New York, United Nations, 2012).